

NOTES FOR USE OF NUL COMMITTEE ON BUCKS COUNTY

MEETING WITH U.S. STEEL OFFICIALS

November 18, 1952

Two years ago Lower Bucks County was a quiet valley of farms and homes, an area rich in tradition and the cradle of much of America's early history. Today it is the spawning ground for one of the world's greatest industrial projects. As the Philadelphia Inquirer has said: "In many meadows, where birds sang through the hushed October afternoons a year ago, there are raw earth scars, growing foundations, and even completely built housing developments. Nearly 300 business firms are building anew or expanding in this area".

Bellwether in this development is the U. S. Steel's \$400,000,000 Fairless Steel Plant being constructed in the bend of the Delaware just below Morrisville, eight miles outside Trenton. This industrial giant will be the magnet to attract hundreds of satellite companies; 10,000 workers and their families; plus those who will come to serve these workers and to man the other plants -- an estimated 100,000 persons.

The new "city" is unique in that it will be a planned development. It will thus present a new opportunity -- a new obligation -- to parallel a modern industrial project with

modern human relations. A 1952 plan, in a 1952 community! In statements by its President, the U.S. Steel Corporation has made clearly evident its understanding of this obligation, and its intention to grasp the opportunity to give to the nation a new community pattern -- with new industries, new schools, new homes, new human relations.

The National Urban League, with a background of forty years of experience in the field of race relations wishes to express to the U. S. Steel officials its desire to join forces in this effort, and pledges its full resources to the end that this new community may BEGIN as a symbol of democracy at its best.

With the above aim in mind we have sought this conference to discuss with U. S. Steel officials several major areas in which we believe we have a mutually deep concern and conviction.

An employment pattern that will assure to every employee
an equal opportunity for work at his highest skill;

A housing pattern that will assure to every resident
adequate shelter, without restrictions based upon
race or color;

A total community pattern that will guarantee to all equal
access to health, educational, recreational, and
all other facilities now established, or to be established, in the community.

The Urban League is aware that, in the over-all picture, Negro workers constitute one-sixth of the work force of U. S.

Steel. (See March, 1952, issue of PAR). We would certainly hope that we might have assurance that approximately this same ratio will be maintained in the new development. It is our further hope that any remaining restrictions due to race or color will be promptly removed so that each worker may have an equal opportunity to qualify at all job levels.

To be in any sense reasonably certain that employment opportunities will be open on the above basis it is necessary that immediate attention be given to the housing patterns which are already being set with the completion and occupancy of thousands of new homes. Heretofore, there has been little in the way of patterns of segregation in Lower Bucks County. It would be most unfortunate if, via segregated housing, there should develop patterns of segregation in health facilities, in classrooms, and in the use of other facilities. What has happened in the present situation in so far as the allocation of houses is concerned is, from this viewpoint, most disappointing; and it is imperative that the U. S. Steel use its influence -- and immediately -- before the present trends become frozen. According to our best information 4000 homes in Levittown have been sold or occupied, and 1600 in Fairless Village have likewise been disposed of, with not a single Negro family accommodated and there is in evidence no plan on the part of those in authority to change this undemocratic procedure.

Because the housing pattern will be the most potent factor in shaping other areas of community life this is the Number One problem that we must jointly tackle at once if our common aims, as outlined in the first paragraphs of this memorandum, are to be realized. Later consideration may be given to the details of the other developments, but this matter of housing can not wait.